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ART. IX.—1. *L'Irlande Sociale, Politique, et Religieuse*,
par GUSTAVE DE BEAUMONT. Paris. 1839. 2 Tomes.
8vo.

2. *Rambles in the South of Ireland, during the Year 1838*.
By LADY CHATTERTON. 2 Vols. London. 1839.

THE history of Ireland, chequered with eventful periods, and full to overflowing with stirring incident, offers nothing to the reflective mind so pregnant with interest as her present situation. There is a tide in the affairs of nations as in those of men. The political waters of the country in question have long had their rise and fall,—tumultuous and agitated in all times ; but certain indications now proclaim the coming crisis, in which the tide must reach the full. It is by no means our purpose to dive into this troubled sea, and drag up historic treasures, or to trust ourselves on its waves, in an adventurous search after undiscovered truths. To trace analogies between the past and the present, and from them to prophesy what is to be, is, if not altogether futile, at least a task out of our design. We hear O'Connell shouting forth “ Justice to Ireland ! ” We see Father Matthew pointing out temperance to Irishmen. We know that the country has been treated unjustly ; that the people have been intemperate, the inevitable consequence of absolute ignorance,—which is, in its turn, the heaviest curse that a government can negatively inflict upon a nation. But can we, from these premises, venture to predict the consequences of the past oppressions, or the present outcry for redress ?

The wisest statesmen of the old world confess themselves at fault on this momentous subject. That “something must be done *with* Ireland, or *for* Ireland,” is now more than the common-place cant of a dominant party in the state, ready to heap some new infliction on the country, or of a hungry opposition, willing to turn her bitter sufferings to political account. To solve the perilous problem, and say what the “something” is, we shall not, as we have already indicated, attempt. Neither can any English faction, Tory, Whig, or Radical, now dare to do it. The great question has become a grand experiment, and it has fallen into proper hands at last. Ireland herself must work it out. Her yet unfulfilled destiny, as a portion of European civilization, is to

be completed only on her own soil, by her own sons. England has never had the virtue, and never probably could have the wisdom, to accomplish it. This incapacity is not, however, a lot peculiar to England. No nation has ever yet done perfect justice to another. No spontaneous spring of magnanimity has ever thrown wide the portals to a conquered and imprisoned people. A section of a population may be joined with its victors, under a promise of equal rights and a semblance of amalgamation, as was often effected by ancient Rome. A class may be emancipated ; a part may be freed from local restraints ; modern England furnishes examples. But no wholesale manumission has ever taken place from nation to nation ; and England is probably the last of all to make such an original and glorious bound on the career of greatness.

In saying this, we do not mean to put a brand on the brow of a great people, or fix a stigma of tyranny on their character. We only specify, after all, a peculiarity of *race*, when we say that England has, of all nations *as yet*, most broadly developed the instinct of territorial ambition. It is no new position of ours ; and the Anglo-Saxon blood will everywhere rise up to admit it, with a glow of pride rather than a blush of shame. From the earliest of her wars with France down to the present time, England has been too narrow for the English. The possession of Gascony, wrenched from her after a fearful struggle ; the invasion of Ireland, where she has from the first kept firm hold ; the seizure of the American continent and islands, where she has still a footing, slippery it is true, but undisputed ; the overrunning of India ; the acquisition of Gibraltar, of the Cape of Good Hope, Malta, the Ionian isles, and the colonization of Australia, are points enough on which to rest. We say nothing of expeditions now on foot for China, with views still in embryo, nor of imputed designs on California. The brief enumeration already made sufficiently establishes, that the pride of colonial conquest is the absorbing “ appetite, which grows by what it feeds on,” in the English mind ; a passion without bounds ; the sustaining excitement of the most wonderful nation the world has ever seen.

Is it, then, to be for a moment imagined, that England will voluntarily concede to Ireland the “ justice,” which, let O’Connell say or think what he may, means nothing less than the dismemberment of the British Empire ? The standard of

Repeal is at length fairly and openly hoisted, and nothing can now satisfy the vast majority of the Irish people, but a dissolution of that union, which was always repugnant to their feelings, galling to their pride, and which England has never attempted to carry out in the true spirit of union. Ireland has been tied to England, not attached. The great object of her wishes is a divorce, let that object be covered as it may by the robes of the vague and visionary "justice," for which she calls, and which, if once granted, we are told, would immediately silence the cry for repeal.

But this "justice" is nothing more, than an untangible rallying-cry of war, — not a positive and specific banner, under which men might assemble and fight. The great principles of law and government, presumed to be invoked, form a mass of complicated difficulties in the present state of Ireland, which defies unravelling. Let England now do what she may, let her concede the whole list of grants, which the Irish people ask, and which their celebrated leader implores for, in the attitude and tone of a bold beggar, his hat in the middle of the road, and his weapon in its rest on the side-path, — nothing will satisfy six-sevenths of the people of Ireland but a Repeal of the Union. What ulterior hope may lurk behind, in the minds of the enthusiastic or the far-seeing, it is not for us to say ; nor will we risk a foretelling that futurity might belie. But it is quite clear, that England must view the Repeal of the Union only as the first step towards the independence of Ireland. And can it be believed, that she will ever consent to that *premier pas*, which must be paid for at so ruinous a price ? O'Connell, in his last address, — a most important document, — pretends, or perhaps believes, that England will at once accede to the demand for repeal, now put forward in so formidable a shape. The sanguine people he addresses may join in and reiterate the opinion. But we pronounce it a mere fallacy ; not because we doubt O'Connell and his associates, either individually or in the mass, but because we know the English character. When did England ever concede so great a boon, or any great boon, of herself, and *in good time* ? Let her domestic history answer the question. Let American independence and Catholic emancipation stand forth in relief, as evidence all-sufficient. When necessity forces a great measure from British power, it is always yielded *greatly*. There is no half-opening of the hitherto closed

hand, no faltering, no fear of misrepresentation, no care for the opinion of others, no doubt of her own judgment. The peace of 1783, with the United States, the pacification of Europe, in 1814, the Catholic Relief Bill, in 1829, the Reform Bill, in 1830, are a few out of many splendid monuments of national power and of the largest political sagacity. Whenever other nations or her own subjects act, for their own interest, with courage and industry, England has always shown, in the long run, her appreciation of those two main qualities in her own character. Sympathy with them will obtain fully, what justice or policy may fail to obtain at all. England, above all nations, knows how to yield with dignity, and to give with grandeur. We are not blind to her faults ; but we glory in her virtues. And we are sure, that, if Ireland can put forward and sustain her just and rational claims, in a spirit worthy of British admiration and esteem, those claims will, sooner or later, force their concession from the magnanimous spirit, which is enshrined in a tabernacle of pride and ambition. But, to expect that Great Britain will lop off the right arm of her power, fling away the best weapon of her armoury, and lay herself open to the assaults of an envious world, is to expect a suicidal infatuation, of which she has as yet shown no symptoms. Ireland must, we think, soon open her eyes to this. England will, we believe, soon take Ireland closer to her embrace. The Union, of which it is chimerical to anticipate the quiet repeal, must, undoubtedly, be fairly and fully consummated, if Great Britain would preserve her political existence, and strengthen its foundation.

The greatest good, that England could grant to Ireland, modifying, if not altogether neutralizing a mass of misrule, was the advantage of her example. The national union for all national objects, good or bad ; the merging of party feeling in the common cause ; this, — the great secret of a people's power, of which our own national motto, *E pluribus unum*, is the condensed expression, — England has been involuntarily teaching to Ireland for centuries ; and Ireland has at last got the lesson by heart. She has been long reading in the volumes of experience, and not without results. Her past efforts for relief were mere preparatory steps for the race she is now entering on. Her training has been complete. Her furtive glances at freedom have taught her to

bear the blaze of liberty. Every one of the wild and bloody trials, which she has made in the practice-field, has prepared her to enter the lists, for serious action, with reflective steadiness and concentrated force.

Casting back our looks upon Ireland as she was in 1782, when Grattan raised the whole country, by the impassioned logic of his eloquence, into an attitude of independence, again at the formation of the Society of United Irishmen in 1791, and, finally, at the fierce outburst of rebellion in 1798, we can trace, step by step, the great gradations by which the country, in her own despite and unknown to herself, was reaching that measure of Legislative Union, by which she was, in 1800, entirely engulfed. The patriotic declarations of these various epochs bear to each other, and to those of the present time, a complete similarity of tone and sentiment. They are, in fact, but links in the same chain of public wants and wishes ; the utterance of the same hopes, by different generations of men, for the common object of nationality. This might be supposed to suggest, by implication, the failure of all the present aspirations. But the previous popular movements, leading for a while to partial success, and followed at last by total thraldom, have no direct analogy with the agitation of to-day. Different sections of the same race have been and are struggling for the same purpose, the accomplishment of their political and social civilization. But nothing can be more opposed than the circumstances of the times and the habits of the people. When Grattan, in 1782, aroused an ardent population to arm for a loyal insurrection, and forced from the British Parliament a repeal of its own unconstitutional claim to bind Ireland by its statutes, more than four-fifths of that population were in the depths of political degradation, and the whole in a state of national debauchery and still untamed ferocity. England soon found means to cajole and disarm the volunteers, and, by goading the Catholics into premature and hopeless rebellion, turned the very weapons of the Patriot Protestants into instruments for crushing the people, and thus preparing the Parliament for the corruption, under the effects of which the Union was finally consummated. When Wolfe Tone founded the Society of United Irishmen, the whole country was disjointed ; antipathies were rife ; and all the eloquent appeals of that

immortal combination of patriotism and talent were but so many acts of alliance with the policy of England, carried out by its Irish creatures, for that catastrophe of revolt, which placed the country, bound hand and foot, at the mercy of its exasperated conqueror. The Union, the basest of all political crimes, — the partition of Poland was the boldest, — was carried ; Irish independence was trampled in the dust ; and England gained a vile triumph at a purchase far dearer than the proudest victory was worth.

The Union, so effected, and followed up with vindictive energy, has been, hitherto, a total failure for all the nobler purposes of national amalgamation. English ministers have borne down the rhetoric of Irish members in Parliament, by the weight of figures and of calculation, to show, that the Union has proved to Ireland a blessing, which Pitt, in his pamphlet, in 1799, and Clare and Castlereagh, in their speeches at the same epoch, promised that it should become. But it is not by arithmetic, that popular sentiment can be smothered. The Union has proved a fiction. To make it a reality, the whole system of government, which prevailed in Ireland for centuries, required a total change. Men are always found to work out the destinies of nations. The necessity of a case is sure to generate the instruments for its completion. The ministers, who have governed Ireland for the last few years, have been sensible of the duties of their mission, have labored to surmount its difficulties, and have prepared the country to coöperate in its own salvation. They have sagaciously discovered, honestly admitted, and boldly resolved to extirpate, the evils which previous administrations either saw not, denied, or cherished. Under their protection a noble self-confidence has sprung up among the Irish people, more effective, for purposes of good, than all the efforts of demagogues and the deceptions of factions can be for mischief. Proud in their recovered rights, the millions of Ireland were ripe for political and moral regeneration. Two powerful apostles have appeared among them, of characters wholly dissimilar, but with objects the same, and acting simultaneously with an influence unexampled and almost incredible. The double action of “peaceful agitation” with social reform, effected by Daniel O’Connell and Father Mathew ; the decrease of crime ; the rapid spread of temperance ; fighting out of fashion and whisky out of favor ; the

distilleries closed for want of customers, and the jails left open for want of criminals,—all this presents a spectacle, sublime to the philanthropist, but appalling to the desperate faction, which has long trafficked in political rights, and made a mockery of moral worth. Those, who would hold the Irish people down in ignorance and debauchery, may well tremble at the work now going on. Those, who take pride in the advancement of the human race, who, though doubting the possibility of perfection, rejoice at improvement, must turn towards Ireland,—as we confess ourselves to do,—with sentiments of great admiration and with much solicitude.

At this distance from the scene of pacific action, but deeply interested in the result, we will not presume to speculate further on what is going forward. When we took up this subject, it was with the intention of going into it far more deeply than these rapid remarks have done. We had piled on our table a heap of authorities. We proposed a treatise, and have only thrown off a sketch. In fact, the matter was at once important and pressing. Finding that we could not, from various causes, at present do justice to it in a lengthened essay, but anxious to call the attention of our readers, at home, to the mighty movement abroad, which must influence, in its results, a large portion of the population of this country, we have thus hastily put together a few of the thick-crowding thoughts, which the subject so abundantly supplies ; and we shall give some extracts from the latest and the best work, illustrative of the true state of Ireland.

We have closed, in despair of turning them to immediate account, many a tome, replete with matter of deep interest, besides some full of repulsive and wearisome details. The accounts of rebellions and massacres, from that of Sir John Temple, Knight, 1641, to that of Sir Richard Musgrave, Baronet, 1798, made us “sup full with horrors.” The duodecimo History of Tom Moore, made us wonder, how one, who has sung so lightly and poetically of Ireland, could write about it with a ponderous pedantry, more fatiguing than the heavy folios of Plowden, or the pompous phraseology of Sir Jonah Barrington. Mr. Inglis’s rambling tour is amusing, and, in some minor details, instructive ; and Lady Chatterton’s “Sketches” are delightful specimens of good taste and good feeling, from the pen of a most accomplished gen-

tlewoman. We might enumerate several other works, into which we have conscientiously looked, and with extracts from which we intended to enrich the present paper. But we must acknowledge, that, among all the writers, who have lately made Ireland the theme of their observations, none appears to have entered into the subject with so thorough a spirit of philosophical inquiry as the French traveller, whose work stands first on our list. M. de Beaumont is known in this country as the author of the tale of "Marie," and as one of the authors of a book on the American Penitentiary System. Romance and statistics are somewhat incongruous materials in the formation of a literary reputation. We are not now about to separate or examine the claims of M. de Beaumont on either score; but we can safely recommend the work before us, as containing comprehensive views of the social and political state of Ireland, and as worthy of being quoted largely from, or, what is better, thoroughly studied, by those who wish for sound information on the affairs and the feelings of that country at the present extraordinary crisis.

We might safely make our extracts at random, and not go astray. There is considerable perspicuity, and absence of prejudice, and an almost intuitive knowledge of national character, in those French writers of the modern school, Tocqueville, Chevalier, Beaumont, and some few others, which put to utter shame the shallow and narrow-minded English tourists, who have made America and a great part of Europe the scenes of their paltry proceedings. To mark the absurdity of those flimsy creatures, who set aside "a whole year," as a sufficient period for acquiring a general knowledge of this great continent, and for forming, writing, and publishing their opinions on all the complicated and mysterious materials which go to make the national mind of sixteen millions of human beings, we give the concluding paragraph of M. de Beaumont's Preface, on the comparatively small, compact, and easily to be understood country of his inquiries.

"The reader will see, from the preceding remarks, the nature of the author's undertaking, the difficulties he encountered, and the efforts he has made to attain his object. Whoever supposes, that he thinks he has overcome these obstacles, is mistaken; his conscience bears him witness only, that he

has left no means untried to surmount them. After one journey in England and Ireland he undertook his work ; but, at the end of two years' labor, he became satisfied that he still wanted many of the proper materials ; and, returning to the sources of information, he visited these two countries anew, and attempted to take notice of what had before escaped his attention, and modified his first researches by these new observations. His book is the fruit of four laborious years. In the course of this long work, though his strength often failed him, he never lost courage. Laboring at first in an incorrect manner, he has written volumes, which he has afterwards destroyed, and which have thus cost him much time and trouble, which is almost lost ; but, after his mistakes, he retraced his steps, and sought the right road, till, as he thought, he found it. Resolved to accomplish his undertaking, at whatever cost, he has devoted himself to it entirely, and has resolutely withheld himself from every engagement and interest which could withdraw him from it. In thus describing the labor which his book has cost him, the author undoubtedly exhibits his deficiencies the more strongly ; but he would rather be accused of weakness, than of ardor, in performing a task, the importance of which he had perceived.

"In conclusion, whatever may have been the extent of his exertions and the length of his labors, he will be fully compensated for both, if, in the picture which follows, he has exhibited one political truth of benefit to mankind, one moral principle of utility to the world ; if, in painting the condition of those who oppress, and those who suffer, he has been able to strengthen, in some minds, love of liberty and hatred of tyranny." — Tom. I. *Préface*, pp. xix. — xx.

Half of the first volume is devoted to a rapid historical sketch, which contains some imperfections, and a few errors, rather personal than political, but of little moment, and not worth the trouble of correcting. The latter part of the volume bears the sad wording, at the head of each page, "Misery of the Irish," "Causes of the misery" ; and the pages, so headed, contain matter enough, God knows, to excite the sympathy of mankind for the sufferings of man, and the indignation of all rational human beings, against the authors of so much wretchedness. Listen to our author.

"We must reflect long on this succession of ages ; we must imagine the rich and the poor invariably following, during this time, two different ways, one leading to extreme wealth, the other to extreme misery ; we must consider the

natural and necessary effects of these two courses, the one of perpetual accumulation, the other of progressive ruin, each increasing the other, and gaining new strength in every one of its consequences ; we must, I say, meditate long on these causes, to understand the excess of luxury to which the Irish aristocracy has arrived, and the inveterate misery by which poor Ireland is covered.

“ The revenues of the rich, in Ireland, sometimes rise to amounts, the immensity of which appears to us almost impossible. The wealthy man makes a magnificent career in this miserable country ; he has splendid edifices, boundless domains, mountains, plains, forests, lakes, — all this ; and often he possesses all this in two or three different places.

“ While millions of unhappy beings are at a loss, every day, how to supply their most pressing wants, the rich man seeks for some means to renew some satiated passion in his breast, or some half extinct appetite in his body. If he wishes to move his person, overcome with weariness of itself, from one place to another, he may choose among the most beautiful roads, which rival those of England. Thus do luxury and wealth move with all ease and ostentation across the sufferings and miseries of the land.

“ Such is the Ireland which the rich man makes for himself. To see happy Ireland, we must choose a point of view which takes in a narrow and isolated field, confining the eyes to neighbouring objects ; but wretched Ireland, on the contrary, is open to the sight everywhere.

“ Naked, famished misery, a vagabond and worthless misery, a mendicant misery, covers the whole country ; it shows itself everywhere, under all forms, at all times ; you perceive it first in landing on the shores of Ireland ; and, from that moment it appears before you, sometimes under the appearance of the sick man who displays his wounds, sometimes under that of the pauper dressed in rags ; it follows you everywhere ; it surrounds you without ceasing ; you perceive its groans and tears from far ; and, if its voice does not move you with profound pity, it importunes and alarms you. This misery appears natural to the soil, and like one of its products ; like those endemic plagues which pollute the atmosphere, it pollutes every thing which approaches it, and touches the rich man himself, who cannot, in the midst of his joys, separate himself from the miseries of the poor, and makes vain efforts to shake off the vermin which he has created, and which attaches itself to him.”

“ Represent to yourself four walls of dry mud, which the rain, in falling, easily reduces to its original condition ; a little stubble for roof, or some squares of turf ; a hole rudely broken in the roof for a chimney, and, more frequently, the very door of the house, by which alone can the smoke escape ; one apartment, containing father, mother, grandfather, and children ; no furniture in this poor hovel ; one bed, made usually of grass and straw, serving for the whole family. You see, crowded in the fire-place, five or six half-naked children, before a scanty fire, the ashes of which cover some potatoes, the only nourishment of the whole family ; in the midst of the whole lies a dirty pig, the only inhabitant of the place who fares well, because he lives in filth. The presence of the pig, in the Irish houses, seems, elsewhere, a sign of misery ; it is, however, a token of some comfort, and there is specially extreme poverty in the cabin where none dwells.

“ Not far from the cottage is a little field of an acre, or a half, in size ; it is sowed with potatoes ; rows of stones, heaped on each other, and bushes, crossing among these, form the inclosure.

“ This dwelling is very miserable ; nevertheless, it is not that of the poor man, properly so called. This is the description of the Irish farmer and of the agricultural laborer.

“ I have said, that there are no small proprietors below the great ones, and none but poor below the wealthy ; but these are miserable in different degrees, and with gradations which I could wish to show.

“ All, being poor, use only the cheapest nourishment in the country, potatoes ; but all do not consume the same quantity ; some, and these are the privileged class, eat three times a day ; others, less fortunate, twice ; some, in a state of indigence, only once ; and there are those, who, more destitute still, pass one whole day, sometimes two, without taking any food.

“ This life of fasting is cruel ; and yet it must be submitted to, under fear of greater evil. He who eats more than he can afford, and fasts once less than he ought, is sure to have nothing with which to clothe himself ; and yet this prudence, this resignation to suffering, are often unproductive.

“ Whatever may be the determination of the poor cultivator in bearing hunger, that he may face his other wants, he is in general naked, or covered with rags, transmitted in the family from generation to generation.

“ In many of the poor houses there is only a complete suit for every two persons ; this obliges the priest of the parish

always to say mass on Sunday several times. When one has heard the first mass, he returns to the house, takes off his clothes and gives them to the other, who goes at once to attend the second mass.

“I have seen the Indian amidst his forests, and the negro in chains, and have thought, while beholding their pitiable condition, that it was the limit of human misery ; I knew not then the fate of the Irish. Like the Indian, the Irishman is poor and naked, but he lives in the midst of a people who seek for luxury, and honor riches. Like the Indian, he is deprived of the good which human industry and the commerce of nations provide ; but he sees some of his equals enjoy this good to which he cannot aspire. In the midst of his greatest distress, the Indian preserves a certain dignified independence. However poor and hungry, he is still free in the desert, and the feeling which he has of this liberty alleviates his sufferings. The Irishman feels the same deprivation, without having the same freedom ; he is subjected to rules and shackles of all kinds ; though governed by laws, he dies of hunger, a sad condition, uniting the vices of the civilized with those of the savage state. Undoubtedly an Irishman who has shaken off his chains, and who has faith in the future, is indeed less to be pitied than the Indian or black slave ; but now he has neither the freedom of the savage, nor the bread of slavery.

“I shall not undertake to describe all the circumstances, all the shades, of Irish misery, from the condition of the poor farmer, who fasts that his children may live, to that of the cultivator, who, less miserable, though more degraded, resolves to beg ; from resigned poverty, which is silent in the midst of suffering, to that which rebels, and, from violence, goes on to crime.

“Irish poverty has an entirely distinct character, which renders it difficult of description, because it can be compared to no other poverty. Irish misery has a distinct form, of which there is no model or imitation. We feel, in beholding it, that we cannot theoretically assign any limit to the wretchedness of a people.

“In all nations there are more or less poor ; but a whole people poor is what we never saw, till Ireland showed it to us.

“To know the social condition of such a country, it is only necessary to relate its miseries and sufferings ; the history of Ireland is that of the poor.”

* * * * *

“Misery descends, in Ireland, to depths elsewhere unknown. The condition, which in Ireland is above poverty, would be elsewhere accounted a state of frightful distress ; and the

wretched classes among us, whose fate we justly deplore, would form in Ireland a privileged class. These miseries of the Irish population are not singular accidents ; almost all are permanent ; those which do not exist always are periodical.

“ Every year, at nearly the same point of time, there is announced in Ireland, the beginning of the famine, its progress, its ravages, its decline.

“ In February last (1838), the French press registered the annual cry of Irish misery, and gave the number of those who, in one month, died of hunger. Either through selfishness or humanity, many choose to think that the accounts given of Irish poverty are exaggerated ; and for them the word *famine*, which is made use of to paint the anguish of Ireland, is only a metaphorical expression, signifying excessive distress, and not the proper term, to express the state of people *actually* famished and dying for want of food.

“ It is especially in England that people like to keep in this state of doubt, from which, however, it is easy to emerge.

“ In 1727, about a hundred years since, the primate Boulter wrote concerning Ireland, where he was the chief agent of the English government ;

“ ‘ Since my arrival in this country (in 1725), famine has never ceased among the poor. So dear has grain been, that thousands have been obliged to quit their dwellings to seek a living elsewhere. Many hundreds have perished.’ When Bishop Doyle was asked, in 1832, what was the state of the population in the west ; ‘ What it always has been,’ said he ; ‘ people are perishing as usual.’

“ In 1817, fevers caused by poverty and hunger, attacked in Ireland one million five hundred thousand individuals, sixty-five thousand of whom perished ; and it has been calculated, that, in 1826, the badness of the food made twenty thousand sick.

“ In the grand inquiry, made in 1835, by the English government, into the social state of Ireland, the following question was addressed by the commissioners to their correspondents in each parish ;

“ ‘ Do you know of any death, in the course of the last three years, of which urgent want was the cause ?’

“ And the inquiry proves a multitude of deaths, which want of food alone had occasioned. Here are the unfortunate, whom hunger has manifestly killed ; there, the wretched, whose death it has hastened. The latter perished from long exhaustion ; the former at once, from disease and hunger. It would be a painful labor to make an abstract of this whole inquiry, which comprises ten folio volumes, some of which contain more than nine hundred pages ; in which every page, every line, every word,

shows some Irish misery, and yet all the wretchedness of Ireland is not related.

“ The commissioners charged with this memorable inquiry estimate, that in Ireland there are nearly three million of individuals, who yearly sink into absolute destitution ; these three millions are not only poor, they are wretchedly poor. Besides these three millions of poor, there are still millions of unhappy creatures, who, as they do not die of hunger, are not counted.

“ The author of this book, to whom similar testimony would have undoubtedly appeared sufficient, wished, however, to see with his own eyes, what his reason hesitated to believe. Twice, in 1835 and 1837, he has, while traversing Ireland, visited expressly the counties where famine has been accustomed to rage with the most violence, and he has verified the facts. Shall he relate here all that he has seen ? No. There are misfortunes which are so much beyond humanity, that human language cannot describe them. And if he were obliged here to relate the scenes of mourning and desolation which he has witnessed ; to repeat the sounds and cries of despair which he has heard ; if he were obliged to tell of the grief of the mother’s voice, when refusing to her hungry children a little bread ; and if, in the midst of this extreme wretchedness, he were obliged to paint the insulting opulence displayed to all eyes by the rich man ; the immensity of his domains, where man’s hand has created artificial lakes, valleys, and hills ; the magnificence of his palace, which is upheld by columns of the most beautiful marble of Greece or Italy, and which the gold of America, the silk of France, and the cloth of India, vie with one another in adorning ; the splendid dwellings, destined for the servants ; the still more splendid abode of the horses ; all the wonders of art, all the inventions of industry, and all the fancies of vanity accumulated in this place, in which the master does not even deign to reside, and which he only visits at long intervals ; the sumptuous and indolent life of this rich man, who knows nothing of the miseries of which he is the author, has never seen them, does not believe in them ; who derives, from the sweat of the poor, 500,000 francs as rent ; each of whose senseless or superfluous enjoyments represents the ruin or distress of some unhappy individual ; who gives every day to his dogs the meal of a hundred families, and causes to die of hunger those who furnish for him this life of luxury and pride ; — if the author were obliged here to recall the dismal impressions which the sight of such contrasts has caused him, and the terrible questions which such inconsistencies have raised up in his mind, he feels that the pen would fall from his hands, and that he would not have courage to finish the task that he wishes to accomplish.” — Tom. I. pp. 200 — 210.

After giving these frightful and too true pictures of Irish misery, M. de Beaumont devotes a chapter to an effort to trace the causes of what he so accurately paints and so feelingly deplores. He finds the first of these causes to be the existence of a *mauvaise aristocratie*, and who, that has had any experience of the sordid, selfish, anti-national nature of Irish landlords, will not add his testimony to what follows ?

“ We cannot consider Ireland attentively, we cannot study its history and its relations, observe its manners, and analyze its laws, without acknowledging that its misfortunes, to bring about which so many fatal accidents and circumstances have concurred, have had, and still have, a prime, radical, permanent cause, one which predominates over all others ; this cause is a bad aristocracy.

“ All aristocracies founded on conquest or inequality, comprise, undoubtedly, many vices ; but all do not contain the same, nor do they possess an equal number.”

“ The English aristocracy, able and national as it is, would have perhaps been powerless to maintain itself, if, at the same time that it covers its vices with splendid virtues, it had not been protected by fortunate accidents.

“ Subject, as are all aristocracies whose principle is privilege, to misemploy its strength for a selfish interest, it has strained to excess the springs upon which it is supported, it has concentrated beyond measure in its hands the possession of the soil which has been monopolized by a small number ; and those, who in England are proprietors, form so small a minority, in comparison with those who are not, that property would perhaps be in danger there, if it were in the eyes of the people a desirable object.

“ But, by a propitious event, more than by the effect of a wise policy, the soil in England has never to this day excited the envy of the inferior classes ; the English people leaves to its aristocracy the monopoly of the land, because it has itself the monopoly of industry. The immense domains of the lord have no attractions to the citizen, to whom the commerce of the whole world offers an unlimited arena, and who thinks that if he makes for himself a great fortune, he shall acquire, perhaps, some day, with the lands of this lord, his title and his honors.

“ The English agriculturist cares little for the political system, whose effect is to send from the fields to the towns the inhabitants of the country, when this agriculturist, at a distance from the soil, finds in a manufactory as regular labor,

and better wages. This, it must be acknowledged, is the greatest security of the English aristocracy ; a weak and failing security, which will only last as long as English industry shall supply the world with its productions.

“ The Irish aristocracy, full of vices from which the English aristocracy is exempt, far from being, like this, aided by favorable circumstances, struggles against fatal tendencies. Thus the situation of Ireland by the side of England, has proved fatal to the Irish aristocracy ; for this aristocracy has never ceased to be English in heart, and almost in interest ; for which reason it has always resided, and still resides, more in England than in Ireland ; and this material fact, which separates it so often from the people under its government, is the source of a vice most fatal to every aristocracy, which can really exist only in the condition of those who govern. The evils of Ireland are often attributed to the non-residence of the aristocracy ; but this is taking the consequence of the evil for the evil itself. The aristocracy of Ireland is not bad, because it absents itself ; it absents itself because it is bad ; because nothing attaches it to its country, nothing retains it there. Why, loving neither the country nor the people, should it stay in Ireland, when England is near, inviting and attracting it by the charms of a more civilized and elegant society, and has the merit of being the country of its origin ?

“ In general, all aristocracy carries in itself the curb which moderates, if it does not stop it in its sallies and its selfishness. It is generally the case, that those who do not love the people fear them, or at least have need of them, and therefore do from calculation what would not be done from sympathy. They do not oppress too much, for fear of exciting to rebellion ; they manage the national force from which they derive advantage, and thus sometimes appear generous, when they are only skilful and interested.

“ The Irish aristocracy has always had the misfortune of neither fearing nor hoping any thing from the people placed under its yoke ; leaning upon England, whose soldiers have always been at its service, it has been able to indulge itself without reserve in its tyranny ; the groans, the complaints, the threats of the people have never lessened the oppression, because beneath the popular clamors there was nothing to be dreaded. Does a revolt break out in Ireland ? the aristocracy of the country does not move ; the English artillery is there, and thunders forth upon the rebels ; and, when all has returned to order, the aristocracy takes, as before, the revenue from the lands.

“ The Irish aristocracy has exercised a power, of which there has been no other example in any country ; it has for six centuries reigned in Ireland under the authority of England, which has given to it half the advantages and spared it all the expense. Provided with rights, privileges, and constitutional guaranties, it has made use of all the instruments of liberty, to practise oppression. Ireland has thus been constantly the prey of two tyrants, the more formidable, that the one has protected the other. The Irish aristocracy, considering itself as the agent of England, likes in this way to absolve itself from its own excesses and personal injustice ; and England, whose rights this aristocracy has exercised, chooses to throw upon the latter the abuse of power.”

“ The Irish aristocracy has two vices, which include all others ; of English origin, they have never ceased to be English ; having become Protestants, they have had to govern a people who have always been Catholics.

“ These two vices contain the beginning of all the evils of Ireland ; here is found the key to all her misery, all her embarrassments. If we would examine attentively this point of departure, we should see flow from it, as entirely natural consequences, the extraordinary circumstances for which we may vainly seek a cause elsewhere. These consequences are of three kinds ; some of which are called civil, because they regard manners ; others political, because they concern institutions ; the last religious, because they spring from the difference of worship. The first affect more particularly the relation of rich and poor, proprietor and farmer ; the second, the reciprocal relations of governor and governed ; and the third, the situation, in regard to each other, of Protestant and Catholic.” — Tom. I. pp. 210—220.

Our author, having thus traced the causes of Irish misery, proceeds, in the natural sequence of just reasoning, to point out what he conceives to be the remedies. The increase of manufacturing establishments, a poor law, and voluntary emigration, are those which he indicates as among the minor ones ; but to these he gives but a very qualified recommendation. Probing deep into the sources of the evil, he views these as but superficial means of redress ; and he sees no actual prospect of good, short of measures which amount to a total revolution in the state. The repeal of the Union he deems unlikely, if not impracticable. And his wholesale plan of reformation embraces the abolition of all aristocratical

privileges, the division of landed property among small proprietors,—as in this country and in France,—and the total severance of the connexion between church and state.

These, it will be admitted, were but Utopian plans, as long as Ireland was morally besotted, and while England was expected to carry them out. Even when M. de Beaumont wrote, the grand secret of redress and the great principle of power had not been discovered. O'Connell had produced, it is true, that extraordinary political organization which carried emancipation, and which is disciplining the people for all the active exigencies of reform. But TEMPERANCE, the mighty foundation on which every thing great and good is to be built in Ireland, was not until, as it were, the other day, preached, thought of, or dreamed of, as practicable to any extent beyond mere local and passing occasions, or as a concomitant branch of a rational, yet commonplace, code of morals. Now, it is known, felt, and *sworn to*, by millions of determined men, as the one master-key to all the most difficult problems of national regeneration. The inspiration has fallen on those millions through the agency of one man. And Father Mathew stands alone, on the very highest pedestal of virtuous fame, in a holier ordination than that which priested him; not as a mere follower of Grattan, or coadjutor of O'Connell; not as a rival of the majestic eloquence and dignified patriotism of the former, or of the fierce energy and fiery perseverance of the latter; but as the equal, in influence, of each of those great men, and forming with them a triple combination, whose attributes are not unaptly figured out by the verdure, brightness, and equality of the three-leaved shamrock, Ireland's national emblem. It is, indeed, hard to adjudicate the palm to either of the members in this trinity of fame. Grattan awoke in the hearts of bondmen the love of liberty. O'Connell taught them how to become free. Mathew is making them worthy of freedom. Grattan armed eighty thousand citizens, and won Ireland's commercial and parliamentary independence by physical force. O'Connell enfranchised hundreds of thousands by claims of constitutional right. Mathew disenthralls millions from the tyranny of self-debasement by the power of moral suasion. Grattan acted on the passions, O'Connell on the judgment, Mathew on the consciences, of men; each being admirably fitted to the times in which his efforts came into play, and to the state of social

feeling on which he was to act. Each has labored well in his vocation. The result of their combined missions,—the happiness of Ireland,—is about to be accomplished. What that may be in its *ensemble*, its details, its working out, will in a great measure depend on others. To them, however, who planned the great design of national creation, from a chaos of political turbulence and social debasement, the first and the highest place must be assigned, in the gratitude and veneration of the masses of whom they have made a **PEOPLE.**

The first two of the remedies advocated by M. de Beaumont, manufacturing industry and a poor law, will now have fair play, which they never could have had as long as drunkenness was there to counteract them. The third, emigration, which, as a measure of state policy on a large scale, he considers too difficult for much good, will most probably be checked by the success of the others. When men have a home which is made habitable, a field for the exercise of labor, and a resource against the chances of distress, they will be in no hurry to abandon it ; they will have no necessity for severing the ties of social affection, or seeking beyond the ocean for shelter against the ills of their native land. So far as the United States may be affected by the bright day which now dawns on Ireland, these considerations are of great interest. Those among us who deprecate an increase of immigration from that country, may rejoice in the amelioration which must tend to keep its population at home. Those who receive with pleasure each fresh accession to our millions, will in future have to hail the new comers with which every ship may be freighted, not with the mingled compassion and repugnance, excited by worn-down, servile victims of licentiousness and poverty, but with the welcome due to men proud in their self-respect, of temperate habits, and unspotted characters, and in all ways worthy of the citizenship which awaits them here.

The abolition of the privileges of the "*mauvaise aristocratie*" of Ireland is among the most prominent of those projected remedies, which our author indicates as almost a necessary consequence of the rest. He draws a wide and well-defined distinction between the aristocracy, grown, by a long series of circumstances, to be an inseparable portion of the social system of England, and that dominant mass of titled

and endowed corruption, which, in Ireland, bears the same distinctive epithet. He plainly advocates the destruction of this mongrel aristocracy, with all its rights of entail, primogeniture, and other privileges. But he must be heard for himself.

“ When I say, that the aristocracy of Ireland must be destroyed and extirpated, even to its root, I do not mean by this a violent and sanguinary destruction.

“ I do not agree with those people, who think, that to establish order, prosperity, and union in a country, it is necessary to begin by murdering some thousands of persons, sending those who are not killed into exile, taking the property of the rich, giving it to the poor, &c. &c. I set aside all such methods as iniquitous, and I do not inquire if they would be necessary. I believe, without examination, that they are not necessary, that they are not just, and that they are atrocious. It is in my eyes a vicious proceeding, when one injustice presents itself to be reformed, to begin by committing another, and to do what is certainly and at present evil, in prospect of a future and doubtful good. I distrust those criminal means, which are sanctified by the end, and which, if the end fails, leave nothing but the crime to him who makes use of them ; or it may rather be said, that criminal means can never become honest. Besides, I am unwilling to admit, that injustice and violence ever profit either nations or individuals. I think too highly of the progress of humanity, to suppose, that excesses which dishonor it can ever be useful to it. A great crime sometimes seems to hasten forward liberty, but having impelled it on, by a leap, for one day, stops it perhaps for ages. If it could even be proved to me, that a crime is advantageous to the present generation, I should not think that this generation had a right to impose upon the next the infallible expiation of it.

“ I mean the abolition of the Irish aristocracy, understanding by this, that it should be divested of its political power, of which it has made use only to oppress the people. Let it be deprived of its civil privileges, which have only been the means of gratifying its selfishness, and let that religious predominance be humbled, which, if it does not produce persecutions, perpetuates the remembrance of them.

“ To destroy the political power of the aristocracy, it is necessary that it should be deprived of the daily application of the laws, as it has been before deprived of the power of making them. Consequently, it would be necessary to de-

stroy, from top to bottom, the administrative and judicial system, which rests on the institution of justices of the peace, and on the organization of the grand juries, as they are at present constituted, — and in the first place, to execute this destruction, it would be necessary to establish a system for the centralization of power.” — Tom. II. pp. 180 — 182.

Into this subject M. de Beaumont enters at length, and with a force of argument which can be fairly understood only by a reference to the book itself. Of two serious points, connected with this important portion of the work, we can only say a few passing words, and can afford but small space for extracts. And first, of the Orange party ; that is to say, the loathsome faction which has domineered in Ireland for more than a hundred and fifty years, and which must, from the nature of things, and from its own action, perish like a pestilential weed, in its self-engendered rottenness. It is defined by M. de Beaumont, as follows ;

“ The old Anglican party, which takes for a device the salvation of the Protestant church, and for a rallying-word, hatred of Popery, has for its sacramental principle the intimate union of Church and State, that is to say, of the Anglican worship and the Anglican aristocracy. Whilst every thing advances, and every thing about it changes, this party remains immovable ; and it will sustain, on the ruins of a universe, that a political society cannot exist, if it is not exclusively Protestant.

“ This party cannot conceive of a Protestant society without a Protestant church, a Protestant government, a Protestant king, Protestant judges and functionaries, Protestant citizens and soldiers ; whoever in the country is not a Protestant, is, in the view of this party, as if he did not exist, and has only an imaginary life.

“ It is the opinion held by this party, that every thing, which has been done contrary to this exclusive principle, has been ill done. The constitution was violated on the day when a single penal law against the Irish Catholics was abolished. These laws are in no wise oppressive to the Catholics ; it depends only on themselves to become free under the protection of the laws ; they have nothing to do but to make themselves Protestants ; it is very natural, that this condition should have been exacted from them, since Protestantism is the law of the country, the law of the State, the law of the soil. This party dates from the year 1688.

“According to this party, the constitution was violated on the day when Scotland was permitted to have a Presbyterian church ; and a sort of sacrilege was committed, when the English Parliament endowed with the funds of the State, a seminary designed for the education of Catholic priests. The constitution was again violated, when the electoral right, the right to be elected to Parliament, was granted to the Irish Catholics ; in the eyes of this party, these concessions are as if they had not happened, and he who believes it impossible to retract, deplores them. Whenever such concessions are made to the Catholics, the Tory party sees, or feigns to see, a dreadful monster ready to escape from the iron cage where he is chained, to spring upon and devour the people ; this hideous monster is Popery.

“This party holds in singular veneration the name of William the Third, Prince of Orange, the conqueror of the Boyne, and the last founder of the Anglican church in Ireland ; it is inspired by the recollection of him, wears emblems which recall him, gives at public festivals toasts to his glorious memory, and endeavours to support, in all their vigor, the religious passions on which the fortunes of that prince were elevated ; from which causes it took the name of the Orange party.

“This party, which for more than a century trampled the Catholics under foot, holds them still more in scorn than in hatred. When they speak of an honest company, it is of course a company of Protestants that they mean. In their language, every thing which is Protestant is called respectable, in opposition to every thing Catholic.

“This party considers, that all the ills of the country have come upon it from the weakness of the power, which did not, when an opportunity offered, sufficiently repress the rebels. Having stated, that after the insurrection of 1798, sixty-six persons accused of rebellion, were executed at Wexford alone, the historian, Sir Richard Musgrave, who considers the repression as tender, adds, *We may judge from this of the clemency of the government.* Here is the true Orange man. Under the ardent religious and political passions of the Orange or Tory party, are found some interests, among others that of preserving immense privileges for an aristocracy which does not govern, and a magnificent revenue for a church which has nothing to do.” — pp. 88 – 90.

The established church of Ireland is the other great feature of national grievance. M. de Beaumont says, “As long as the established church is the religion of the state, the

state will be odious to the country, and there will be no possibility of prosperity or repose for Ireland." He continues ;

" The Anglican supremacy is, to Ireland, the principal and the continual source of all evil. It signifies, to the Irish, violence, confiscation, rapine, cruelty. It is, in their eyes, the certain sign of injustice, of falsehood, and of spoliation. As long as the English church is the established worship in Ireland, wrong or right, this country will not consider itself free. It will feel, that it is always treated as an oppressed and conquered country, because the most bitter remembrances of the conquest are all connected with Protestantism, and there is no recollection of Protestantism, which is not mingled with tyranny."

* * * * *

" This principle of religious domination, in which are resumed and perpetuated all the old grievances of Catholic Ireland, will be, while it lasts, an inexhaustible source of division, hatred, attack, and resistance. It will render fruitless all authority, even the most beneficent, which is founded on this basis. Vainly will any government, in other respects the most national, attempt to establish unity in Ireland ; it will be powerless and fragile, if it is laid upon this vicious foundation. Vainly will reforms be made in the administration of the Anglican church ; it will be in vain to correct abuses, to abolish sinecures, to diminish the wealth of the clergy ; the evil will be always the same, as long as the principle prevails, which attributes to the Anglican church a superiority over other modes of worship ; and this evil will always provoke the same risings ; the same violence, the same popular rebellions, will appear. What particular event will be the occasion of them we cannot say, but the result will not fail to take place."—
pp. 239—240.

" Whence comes the inutility of the efforts which have been made to reform the Anglican church of Ireland ? It is because Ireland does not wish its reform, but its abolition. The radical vice of this church is, that it is established as the legal and official worship of a people, who have another form of worship. The abuse is, its very establishment. Its creation, in the bosom of a Catholic people, is a wrong, which perpetuates itself as long as that church endures. The great evil of the Anglican church in Ireland is, that it is placed in the midst of a population, which repels it without examination. Its riches, its luxury, its idleness, are assuredly great vices, but the most

enormous of all vices is its existence. Its destruction, in Ireland, is the first step towards good sense and good order.

“ When we speak of abolishing the Anglican church, we do not mean to annihilate, in Ireland, the Episcopal worship, but only to destroy the political superiority of this form over all others. Neither would it be necessary, in abolishing the predominance of the Anglican worship, to replace it by the supremacy of the Catholic worship. What is important is, to establish in Ireland an equality of worship. Ireland, it is true, is Catholic in the main, as England is Episcopal, and Scotland Presbyterian ; and it would be logical, that Ireland should have a Catholic establishment, in the same manner as Scotland has a Presbyterian establishment, and England an Anglican one. But, in the first place, it is a great question, whether it is advantageous to unite church and state. Why associate human and perishable institutions with one which is of God, and which will never die ? What would be the effect of proclaiming, in Ireland, the Catholic religion as that of the state, except the destruction of the religious privileges of the Protestants, to transfer them to the Catholics ? After having abolished the injurious supremacy of the Anglican church, which offends a majority of the Irish people, would you see the Protestant minority oppressed by the religion which it now oppresses ?

“ One of the greatest evils, to which Catholic Ireland could be exposed, is, that, after having been ruled over, it should wish to rule.

“ This would be a fruitful source of misfortunes to England and to itself ; to England, because it would not bear this dominion of a sect, and because all the old passions of the Reformation would be aroused by this Popish pretension ; and to Ireland itself, which would be crushed anew by England.

“ It is important to the two countries, that Ireland should be accustomed to religious liberty ; and what better means are there, to give it tolerant customs, than to place all religions on the same footing ? It is now, while England protects Ireland, that she ought to give to the Catholics of this country a lesson of this sort. The equality of sects should come as a benefit ; soon, perhaps, they will consider it an evil ; and this will certainly happen, if this equality does not take place, in Ireland, till the Catholics are politically superior ; they will then consider equality of sects as only introduced for the degradation of their religion.” — pp. 246 – 248.

We cannot follow our author in the long chain of argument by which he shows, to his own satisfaction, if not quite to our conviction, the facility of establishing a perfectly religious

equality in Ireland. Considering the long series of abuses inflicted on that country by the established church, — its intolerance, its enormous wealth, its lordly privileges, its insolent pretension, — we believe that no moderate modification of its present state can well be brought about by legislative enactments, or that such would be at all likely to conciliate the Catholic population ; nor do we think any half measures sufficient for the great interests of religion. It is to us quite clear, that the flood of Catholic supremacy must pass over Ireland before the seeds of true Christianity can spring up. The destruction of “Protestant ascendancy” is an inevitable necessity. The false system, so long fostered, has been the ruin of Protestantism. Orange ferocity and Catholic degradation have only prepared the way for Catholic power and Orange extirpation. Protestantism is gradually expiring in Ireland, from its own excess. It has long lost all moral force. Political power and social influence are gradually slipping away from it. It must, inevitably, rapidly lose every one of its hitherto overgrown prerogatives. Then Catholicism will most probably arise, in pomp, insolence, and persecution. Protestantism will either struggle violently, in tumult and blood, or disappear in expatriation. Protestant property will pass into Catholic hands ; and Catholic influence is not likely to change its nature, and become tolerant towards what it hates, and so naturally longs to be revenged on. England, from whom M. de Beaumont expects all good things for Ireland, may, by following the course of great wisdom which seems to guide the present government, and by a magnanimous interference, hold the balance even between the conflicting parties, and mitigate the severity of the lot of over-powered Protestantism in Ireland. Catholicism may possibly be moderate, instead of rampant ; but, if so, it will not be Catholicism in its ancient spirit. However all this may be, — and who may penetrate the veil of futurity ? — we believe the only chance for true enlightenment in Ireland, according to the genuine principles of the Reformation, is in the existing church establishment being thoroughly purged, ay, or altogether overthrown ; when the state may really flourish in unclogged and legitimate power, and the church have a chance of starting anew, on a career in accordance with its pristine purity.

We are reluctantly obliged to omit M. de Beaumont’s reasonings, on the state of the judiciary, the magistracy, the infe-

rior officers of justice, and the constitution of Irish juries, corporations, and vestries. He has left nothing untouched, of all the ramifications composing the tangled web of Irish misgovernment; and he winds up his labors, by entering into the question, what can England do for Ireland? — tracing, as far as his judgment can decide it, what is to be expected from each of the three great parties, which now struggle for predominance in the United Kingdom. We consider an inquiry of this nature the less necessary on our part from the opinion with which we started, and which we now emphatically repeat, that it is by Ireland herself that the work of amelioration is to be done. The business is in her hands. She has at last taken it up in the right spirit; and, whatever may be the *something*, which Providence has destined for the relief of a fine country and a noble people, it has now, for the first time for centuries, a fair chance of being fitly accomplished.

We are happy in believing, that a strong sympathy will be felt throughout the United States of America for the progress of Irish prosperity. Whenever a fair occasion has offered for displaying the good feeling of the people at large in favor of their Irish fellow-citizens, the result has always been such as every philanthropic mind must approve. Deplorable collisions have from time to time arisen between the Irish and small fractions of the native population. Excesses have been committed by a few, ignorant, prejudiced, and hot-headed persons. But the good sense and respectability of the country has always reprobated those partial aberrations from propriety and legality. Our attention has been lately called to a course of lectures on Irish History and Character, delivered in New York, by Mr. Samuel G. Goodrich, (the well known "Peter Parley,") and which are, we understand, very shortly to be published. We hope their promised appearance will take place in such time as to enable us to notice, in our next Number, a work, which, although it may be of slight dimensions, will, we are sure, contain matter of the highest interest on the important subject we have in this paper introduced to our readers' notice, and which we shall certainly follow up, in connexion with its bearings on this country.
